

# ABC's of Health



## Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

### Awareness...

- ❖ Alcohol is a legal drug. Beer, wine, and hard liquor are all alcoholic beverages. Illegal drugs include heroin, crack/cocaine, LSD (acid), Ecstasy, and other chemicals such as spray paint.
- ❖ Some people can drink or use drugs for short periods of time or in small amounts with few problems. Others cannot handle a small amount even once.
- ❖ Substance abuse is **NOT** defined by **how much** you use, how often you use, or by what type of substance you use. If your drinking or drug use causes **problems** with money, family, work, and/or your health, then you may have a substance abuse problem and you should get help.
- ❖ Drinking alcohol when you are **pregnant** can cause your baby to have fetal alcohol syndrome, which includes physical problems and mental retardation that last a lifetime.
- ❖ Even one or two drinks a day during pregnancy doubles your chance of **miscarriage**, and triples the risk of **premature birth**.
- ❖ Using any drugs during pregnancy can also put your baby in great danger.
- ❖ Over time, alcohol abuse can cause **liver disease** (cirrhosis), **ulcers** and **brain damage**.
- ❖ Drinking too much **alcohol** too fast, or while taking certain **medicines** can kill you.

### Behavior

Answer the following questions to see if alcohol or drugs are a problem for you:

- ❖ In the past year, have you ever felt you should cut down on drinking or drug use?
- ❖ Have others annoyed you by criticizing your drinking or drug use?
- ❖ Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking or drug use?
- ❖ Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover?

If you answered **yes** to **any** question about you or someone you know, there may be an alcohol or drug abuse problem.

## Change

- ❖ If you think alcohol or drugs is becoming a problem for you or someone close to you, don't wait, seek help! **Assistance programs** such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Al-Anon, or employee assistance programs at work can help.
- ❖ Check your phone book for alcohol and drug treatment centers or call the 24-hour national hotline at **1-800-234-1253**.
- ❖ **NEVER! drink and drive** - Call a cab or a friend to give you a ride.
- ❖ If you are pregnant, or planning to get pregnant, don't drink or use drugs. Ask your doctor before taking any medications or drugs.
- ❖ Do not gulp alcoholic drinks - sip slowly. Do not drink on an empty stomach.
- ❖ Ask your pharmacist how drinking may affect any medicine you are taking.
- ❖ Learn the **warning signs** of abuse.
- ❖ Don't wait until you are sure there is a problem - get help now!



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